COMMERCIAL. No. 8 (1890).

CORRESPONDENCE

RESPECTING THE

PROPOSED LABOUR CONFERENCE

AT

BERLIN.

Presented to both Houses of Parliament by Command of Her Majesty.
March 1890.

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Correspondence respecting the proposed Labour Conference at Berlin.

No. 1.

Prince Bismarck to Count Leyden.—(Communicated to the Marquis of Salisbury by Count Leyden, February 12.)

(Translation.) *Berlin, February* 8, 1890.

THE competition of nations in the trade of the world, and the community of interests proceeding therefrom, makes it impossible to create successful institutions for the benefit of working men of one country without curtailing that country's power of competing with other countries. Such institutions can only be established on a basis adopted in common in all countries concerned. The working classes of the different countries have, in due appreciation of this fact, established international relations aiming at the improvement of their condition. But efforts in this direction cannot meet with success unless the Governments interested endeavour to come to an agreement on the more important questions concerning the welfare of the working classes by means of international discussion.

You are aware that the most important points under consideration refer to Sunday rest, restriction of female and child labour, and to agreements in regard to a limit for the length of the working day.

By command of His Majesty the Emperor and King, I request you to inform Her Majesty's Government of the Emperor's intentions, and to ask them to favour us with an answer as to whether they are inclined in principle to enter with us and the Governments of other industrial countries into such a discussion, the programme of which we will prepare in greater detail as soon as we are assured of the willingness of Her Majesty's Government to enter with us into a common examination of the question. You will find inclosed the text of the instructions which I have received from the Emperor. You are authorized to read this despatch and its inclosure to the Minister for Foreign Affairs, and to give him a copy thereof should he desire it.

(Signed) VON BISMARCK.

No. 2.

The Marquis of Salisbury to Sir E. Malet.

Sir, *Foreign Office, February* 22, 1890.

THE inclosed Memorandum* was left with me by Count Leyden on the 12th instant. I have duly submitted it to the Queen; and I have to say, in response to the invitation of His Imperial Majesty the German Emperor, that Her Majesty's Government will gladly take part in a Conference summoned to examine into the grave questions which have been raised with respect to the welfare of the working men in all civilized countries, and the solution of which may be facilitated by international co-operation.

It is intimated in the Memorandum that a more definite programme will be laid before us as soon as the general concurrence of the Governments addressed has been obtained. I will not, therefore, attempt to indicate the precise direction which the deliberations of such a Conference should take. In reference, however, to the points specially mentioned, it may be desirable to draw the attention of the Minister for Foreign Affairs to one ambiguity of expression.

* No. 1.

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If the words "Vereinbarungen über eine Grenze der täglichen Arbeitszeit" ("agreements in regard to a limit for the length of the working day") imply a policy of direct legislative restrictions upon the liberty of adult male workmen to work as long as they please, it is right to say that the principles of legislation accepted in this country would preclude Her Majesty's Government from making such a proposal to Parliament. If, however, they only suggest provisions for facilitating the conclusion of free agreements upon this matter between employers and employed, Her Majesty's Government have no exception to take to its inclusion among the subjects on which the Conference will deliberate.

I am, &c.
(In the absence of the Marquis of Salisbury),
(Signed) JAMES FERGUSSON.

No. 3.

Count Hatzfeldt to the Marquis of Salisbury.—(Received February 28.)

LE Soussigné, Ambassadeur d'Allemagne, en se référant à la communication verbale du 13 de ce mois, a l'honneur, d'ordre de son Gouvernement, de porter à la connaissance de son Excellence M. le Marquis de Salisbury que Sa Majesté l'Empereur d'Allemagne propose une réunion de représentants des Gouvernements intéressés à améliorer le sort des ouvriers industriels et mineurs, en vue d'examiner les questions d'un intérêt international consignées dans l'annexe. Les questions étant sans portée politique se prêtent à l'examen par des hommes spéciaux.

Pour faciliter l'entrée en matière et le cours des délibérations, le Gouvernement Impérial a fait dresser un programme, dont le texte est joint à cette note.

Le Soussigné a l'honneur de prier son Excellence M. le Marquis de Salisbury de vouloir bien lui faire savoir si le Gouvernement de Sa Majesté Britannique est disposé à participer à la Conférence proposée, qui se réunira à Berlin le 15 Mars, 1890. Le Soussigné se permet d'ajouter qu'une invitation semblable est simultanément adressée aux Gouvernements de leurs Majestés l'Empereur d'Autriche-Hongrie, le Roi des Belges, le Roi de Danemark, de la République Française, de Sa Majesté la Reine de Grande-Bretagne, de la Confédération Helvétique, de leurs Majestés le Roi d'Italie, le Roi des Pays-Bas, le Roi de Suède et de Norvège.

Le Soussigné, &c. (Signé) HATZFELDT.

Ambassade d'Allemagne, Londres, le 27 Février, 1890.

(Translation.)

AT the command of his Government, and with reference to his verbal communications of the 13th of this month, the undersigned Ambassador of Germany has the honour to inform his Excellency the Marquis of Salisbury that His Majesty the German Emperor proposes to hold a meeting of the Representatives of the Governments interested in improving the lot of operatives and miners with a view to investigate the questions of international interest, of which a list is annexed.

These questions being outside the range of politics are well adapted for examination by experts.

To facilitate the conduct of business and the course of the discussion the Imperial Government has drawn up a programme, of which the text is inclosed in this note.

The Undersigned begs his Excellency the Marquis of Salisbury to be good enough to inform him if Her Britannic Majesty's Government is disposed to take part in the proposed Conference, which will meet at Berlin on the 15th March, 1890.

The Undersigned begs to add that a similar invitation has at the same time been addressed to the Governments of their Majesties the Emperor of Austria-Hungary, the King of the Belgians, the King of Denmark; to the Governments of the French Republic, of Her Majesty the Queen of Great Britain, of the Swiss Confederation, of their Majesties the King of Italy, the King of the Netherlands, and the King of Sweden and Norway.

The Undersigned, &c. (Signed) HATZFELDT.

German Embassy, London, February 27, 1890.

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Inclosure in No. 3.

Programme des Déliberations de la Conférence Internationale concernant le Réglement du Travail aux Établissements Industriels et dans les Mines.

I.—*Réglement du Travail dans les Mines.*

1. Le travail sous terre, doit-il être défendu :

(*a.*) Aux enfants au-dessous d'un certain âge ?
(*b.*) Aux personnes de sexe féminin ?

2. La journée de travail dans les mines offrant des dangers particuliers pour la santé, doit-elle être soumise à des restrictions ?
3. Pourra-t-on dans l'intérêt public, pour assurer la continuité de la production du charbon, soumettre le travail dans les houillères à un Règlement international ?

II.—*Réglement du Travail du Dimanche.*

1. L'interdiction du travail du Dimanche, doit-elle former la règle, sauf le cas d'exception nécessaire ?
2. Si l'on arrivait à une entente par rapport à l'interdiction du travail du Dimanche, quelles seraient les exceptions admissibles ?
3. De quelle manière serait statué sur ces cas d'exception : par une entente internationale, par les lois, ou par voie administrative ?

III.—*Réglement du Travail des Enfants.*

1. Les enfants, n'ayant pas atteint un certain âge, doivent-ils être exclus du travail dans les établissements industriels ?
2. Quel âge doit former la limite d'exclusion du travail des enfants ?
Cette limite d'âge doit-elle être la même pour toutes les exploitations, ou admettra-t-on sous ce rapport des différences ?
3. Quelles restrictions, quant à la durée de la journée et au genre d'emploi, doit-on prévoir en ce qui concerne les enfants admis au travail dans les établissements industriels ?

IV.—*Réglement du Travail des Jeunes Ouvriers.*

1. Le travail dans les établissements industriels des jeunes ouvriers passés l'âge de l'enfance (I.—2), doit-il être soumis à certaines restrictions ?
2. Quelle est la limite d'âge jusqu'à laquelle ces restrictions doivent avoir lieu ?
3. Quelles restrictions seraient à prescrire ?
4. Doit-on, quant à certaines catégories d'exploitation, prévoir des exceptions aux règlss générales ?

V.—*Réglement du Travail des Femmes.*

1. Le travail de jour ou de nuit, des femmes mariées, doit-il être soumis à des restrictions ?
2. Le travail aux fabriques de toutes les femmes et filles, doit-il être soumis à certaines restrictions ?
3. Quelles restrictions seraient en ce cas à recommander ?
4. Doit-on prévoir pour certaines catégories d'exploitation des exceptions aux règles générales, et quelles seraient dans l'espèce ces catégories ?

VI.—*Mise à l'exécution des Dispositions adoptées par la Conférence.*

1. Devra-t-on prendre des mesures en vue de l'exécution des dispositions à adopter par la Conférence, et de la surveillance de ces mesures ?
2. Y a-t-il lieu de prévoir des réunions réitérées en Conférence des Délégués des Gouvernements participants, et sur quels points leurs délibérations devraient-elles porter ?

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(Translation.)

Programme of Subjects for Discussion by the International Conference respecting the Regulation of Labour in Factories and Mines.

I.—*Regulation of Labour in Mines.*

1. Whether underground labour shall be forbidden—

(*a.*) For children below a certain age?
(*b.*) For persons of the female sex?

2. Inasmuch as the working-day in mines is fraught with great danger to health, should it be subject to limitation?

3. Whether it would be possible in the public interest, in order to assure the regularity of the output of coal, to subject labour in mines to international Regulations?

II.—*Regulation of Sunday Labour.*

1. Whether, as a rule, except in cases of necessary exception, Sunday labour should be prohibited?

2. If an understanding with regard to the prohibition of Sunday labour should be arrived at, what exceptions should be allowed?

3. Whether these exceptions should be determined by international agreement, by law, or by administrative measures?

III.—*Regulation of Child Labour.*

1. Whether children below a certain age should be excluded from labour in factories?

2. What age should be the limit for excluding children from work? Whether this limit of age should be the same for all branches of industry, or whether a difference should be made?

3. What restrictions with regard to length of day and kind of employment should be imposed in the case of children working in factories?

IV.—*Regulation of Labour for Youths.*

1. Whether the work of young men in factories, who have passed the age of childhood (1-2), should be subjected to certain restrictions?

2. What is the limit of age up to which these restrictions should be imposed?

3. What restrictions should be prescribed?

4. Whether exceptions to the general rule should be made in certain branches of industry?

V.—*Regulation of Female Labour.*

1. Should the day or night work of married women be subject to restriction?

2. Whether the working in factories of all women and girls should be subject to certain restrictions?

3. If so, what restrictions should be imposed?

4. Should exceptions to the general rule be made in certain branches of industry, and, if so, what should be these branches?

VI.—*The putting into force of Provisions adopted by the Conference.*

1. Whether steps should be taken to put in force the provisions adopted by the Conference and to provide for their supervision?

2. Whether the Delegates of the Governments interested should hold further Conferences and what questions should engage their attention?

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No. 4.

The Marquis of Salisbury to Sir E. Malet.

Sir, *Foreign Office, March* 3, 1890.

I INCLOSE, for your Excellency's information, a copy of a note from the German Ambassador at this Court,* conveying a formal invitation to Her Majesty's Government to be represented at the International Labour Conference which is to meet at Berlin on the 15th instant.

Count Hatzfeldt, when handing in the note, said that he was instructed to state that the discussions of the Conference would refer not to political but to economic questions and would have a technical, not a diplomatic, character. Foreign Governments would meet the wishes of the German Government by sending Technical Delegates.

His Excellency added that the favourable reception given by Her Majesty's Government to the preliminary communication on the subject induced the German Government to hope that they would accept the invitation.

I am, &c.
(Signed) SALISBURY.

No. 5.

The Marquis of Salisbury to Count Hatzfeldt.

M. l'Ambassadeur, *Foreign Office, March* 6, 1890.

I HAVE pleasure in announcing to your Excellency that Her Majesty's Government accept the invitation conveyed in your note of the 27th ultimo to take part in the Conference on the Labour question which His Majesty the German Emperor has proposed shall meet at Berlin on the 15th instant.

I hope shortly to make known to your Excellency, for the information of the German Government, the names of the gentlemen who will be appointed to represent this country at the Conference.

I have, &c.
(Signed) SALISBURY.

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* No. 3.

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